



# Hamtrix

Volume 53, Issue 2 February, 2008

## In this issue:

<i>The President's Shack</i>	1
<i>Why You Should Operate the WI QSO Party</i>	1
<i>Meeting Minutes</i>	2
<i>Swapfest Report</i>	3
<i>On the Internet</i>	3
<i>Upcoming Programs</i>	4
<i>Scuttlebutt</i>	4
<i>A Glimpse of WIQP Past</i>	6
<i>Birthdays and Anniversaries</i>	7

## Meetings & Events



**February 12**  
Club Meeting

Program:

**WIQP**

**Informal Discussion**

*by Lynn Tamblyn, K9KR*

**February 26**

Board Meeting

**March 2**

Material Due for Next  
**Hamtrix**

**March 9**

**WI QSO Party**

**March 11**

Next Club Meeting



## The President's Shack

*by Howard Smith,  
WA9AXQ*

The 36th Annual Midwinter Swapfest is now completed and I think the new layout worked pretty well. It was nice to have a larger area to just sit and talk or have a snack. The turnout was very good but a little bit less than last year.

And I want to personally thank all of you who came and helped. Your efforts make this event a success. Swapfest chairman Phil, W9NAW, has his report in the Hamtrix. Be sure to read it.

In an article in last month's Hamtrix, Lynn, K9KR, suggested that the North American QSO Party, and the Minnesota QSO Party could be used as practice for our Wisconsin QSO Party. I decided that a little practice could not hurt, so I did participate in the NAQP. I just worked 40 meters, made 44 contacts, 21 multipliers,

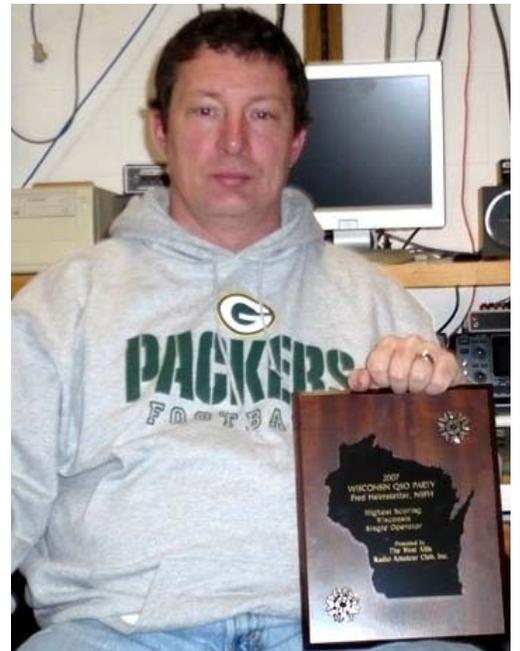
*(Continued on page 7)*

## TEN REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD OPERATE IN THE 2008 WISCONSIN QSO PARTY

*by Fred Helmstetter, N9FH*

This year's running of the WIQP is right around the corner. Some people are sure to get on every year and always have a blast. Other hams either occasionally participate or have never given the WIQP a try. Here are ten good reasons why you should fire up the radio on March 9th, 2008 (1:00PM local time) and join in the fun.

It might be best to start off with a short description of what the WIQP is. This is our state "QSO party" in which hams try to contact as many other stations as possible during the contest period (7 hours on Sunday afternoon and evening in our case). Lots of other states have similar events but ours is one of the best in terms of in-state and out-of-state activity. During the WIQP, the rules for stations inside versus outside



*(Continued on page 5)*



**From the Minutes...**

By Lynn Tamblyn, K9KR  
Secretary

**Minutes of the General Meeting  
January 8, 2008**

The meeting was called to order at 7:38PM by President Howard Smith. Visitors were our program presenter, Bob Schmidt, N9GMT; Emil Devcic, N9FBF, who works with Bob, and Jim Grignon, KE7AZS.

Howard called for a motion to approve the December minutes as published in Hamtrix. A motion was made and approved with no discussion.

Phil announced that Swapfest attendance was 766, down a bit from last year. Further discussion of the Swapfest was delayed until after the program.

**PROGRAM**

This month's program was by Bob Schmidt, N9GMT, on the FM38 linked repeater system. This system consists of about ten UHF repeaters centered on southeastern Wisconsin. It covers as far north as the Fox Valley, as far west as Madison and south into northern Illinois. The system is open to all users and requires a 123.0 Hz CTCSS tone for access. The name FM38 is derived from the primary output frequency of 443.8MHz.

FM38 is not new - it was started about 20 years ago and grew steadily for the next 10-15 years. Most of the effort now goes into updating and upgrading equipment, although there are also plans to expand into the Green Bay area before long.

Bob stated that the primary objective of the project was to make a system that would cover an area that is no more than two hours driving time from Milwaukee while striving for technical excellence and innovation. He said that although a certain amount of money has been invested (he doesn't want to know how much), a lot of their success results from being able to obtain donations of feedline, antennas and tower space. He summed up the project with the statement that, "It's been more about the journey than getting there."

**BUSINESS MEETING**

After refreshments there was a wrap-up of the Swapfest by chairman Phil, W9NAW. All tables were sold but unfortunately a couple of sellers did not show up. Several favorable comments were received on the new layout and the general consensus was that it worked well. Phil took notes on several suggestions for minor improvements for next year.

George, K9ILV, did a brief "show and tell" on an antenna tuner he built that is based on an article in the Radio Amateur's Handbook.

The meeting was adjourned about 9:15PM.

For the Secretary  
Tom Macon, K9BTQ,

**Minutes of the Board Meeting  
January 22, 2008**

The meeting was called to order at 7:34 PM. by Howard Smith. Board members present: Wes Andersen, George Dunco, Tom Macon, Howard Smith, Lynn Tamblyn, and Dick Wood. Guest was Phil Gural.

*WI QSO Party* - Chairman Lynn indicated that all is in order for our club sponsored March 9 event. He will have an informal discussion on WIQP at the February regular club meeting.

*Scholarship Fund* - Howard mentioned that it was getting close to the time that funds for our annual scholarship need to be forwarded to FAR. Howard asked for volunteers to be on the Scholarship Committee. Dick Wood and Howard both volunteered. After discussion, it was decided by the board that Howard will chair this committee. The board then had a discussion about the grant we requested and did not receive. Lynn indicated he had looked into other grants and had a CD that could be a source of grants that he will give to the Committee.

*Club Repeater* - the repeater is still working great. There is no additional information on the status of the new site. The board then had a discussion about the range of the repeater, at its present site and at the proposed new site.

*Meeting Attendance* - Howard reported he had chatted

(Continued on page 7)

2007 WARAC Officers and Board			<b>Hamtrix</b> — Editor & Publisher			
President	J. Howard Smith, WA9AXQ	414 425-5626	Submit newsletter material to: Tom Macon, K9BTQ 3547 S. 95 St Milwaukee, WI 53228 414 543-3878 tmacon@wi.rr.com			
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Director (2008)	Robert F Zach, KC9AGX	414 328-3691				
Director (2009)	George Dunco, AA9SR	262.782-6325				
Director (1 year)	Wes Andersen, N9YE	414.423.0640				
Board Chairperson	J. Howard Smith, WA9AXQ	414 425-5626				
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## REPORT ON

## SWAPFEST 2008

By Phil Gural, W9NAW, Swapfest Chairperson

This year's Swapfest looked a little different and that was on purpose. The South and East buildings were full of seller tables and lots of eager buyers. The North building was used for concessions, rag chewing and publicity by many of the local ham clubs and ARRL officials, Dick Isely, W9GIG, Central Division Director and Don Michalski, W9IXG, Wisconsin Section Manager. Extra tables and chairs were set up so that attendees could eat or sit and talk with their fellow hams. Also these arrangements made it possible for the *Presidents Round Table* and *Badger Contesters* meetings to take place.

Friday morning Tom, K9BTQ, John, K9IAC, Bob, KC9AGX and Phil, W9NAW went out to Waukesha Expo and marked all the tables just ahead of the arrival of several sellers.

On Saturday morning activity started at 6:00 AM with the arrival of many sellers. Chuck, WB9PUB, was busy selling the remaining unsold tables and with "will call" advance reservations. The lobby started to fill about 7:30 AM and was packed at the start of the event of 8:00 AM. It was observed that there was a steady flow of buyers for most of the morning. Attendance, however, was off from last year, with 800 people attending, down 6%.

Some other items of interest:

- The scholarship fund income was \$370, more than we expected from what little equipment was available.
- Thirty club members/friends participated in helping to make this Swapfest a success. This was one of the highest number of helpers in years and made it possible for everyone to get a chance to look around.
- The weather was warm and cloudy which allowed attendees to travel from more than just the adjacent states.
- Two bigger sellers from past years were missing due to health and other reasons.

VE testing was again offered at the AMF Waukesha Lanes. Tom, KF9PU, VEC co-manager, reported that the turnout was lighter than expected. However, it was still a worthwhile session with 11 out of 13 candidates passing either their Technician or General Class licenses.

What about next year? The date has already been set – January 3, 2009. This is the earliest date our Swapfest will ever be held. Club members were passing out business card-size reminders to attendees so that they won't forget this early date. Some other ideas are being discussed about the North Building to make it even more inviting for everyone to stop by.

**Thanks for your help and support!** -----

### On the Internet

- Interested in 160 meters? Check out <http://www.topbanders.com> for all sorts of "Topband" information plus DXCC listings. Ron Gorski, N9AU, is listed with 163 countries.
- A knotty problem. Here's a scientific study of how and why things get tangled. <http://tinyurl.com/2rf16m> It obviously applies to rope and coax, power cables, etc. No doubt Murphy has a post-doctorate degree in this.
- Avoid blowing up your electronic parts. Learn about ElectroStatic Discharge (ESD) at <http://www.esda.org/basics/part1.cfm>

## Ham Happenings

### Around the area

#### Menomonee Falls Club

Bank One  
Pilgrim & Mequon  
Germantown  
Wed, February 27, 7:30PM

#### Milwaukee Radio Amateur Club (MRAC)

Redemption Lutheran Church  
Hwy 100 & Capitol  
Thurs, February 28, 7:00PM

#### Ozaukee Radio Club

Grafton Senior Center  
1665 7th. Ave.  
Wed, February 13, 7:30PM

#### CQ3TUE

Old Country Buffet  
16750 W Bluemound Rd  
Tues. February 19, 11:15AM

#### South Milwaukee Amateur Radio Club

Wed. March 5, 7:00PM  
Legion Post 434  
Shepard Ave  
Oak Creek, WI.

#### Amateur Radio Testing

Saturday, February 23  
9:30AM  
Amateur Electronic Supply  
5720 W. Good Hope Rd

#### NOTE

*Please do not contact meeting places for information.*

**Upcoming Meeting Programs**

**February 12**  
**WIQP**

**Informal Discussion**  
**Lynn Tamblin, K9KR**  
**Bring your questions!**

**March 11**

**6 Meter Operation**  
**Wes Anderson, N9YE**

**Tentative Future Program**  
**Weather Forecasting**

Have an idea for a program?  
Something you'd like to hear about?

Let us know - Contact a Board member!

**Thanks!**



Thanks and a tip of the editor's hat to the following contributors to this month's issue of **Hamtrix**

- Fred Helmstetter, N9FH**
- Paul Antos, WB2ABD**
- Antenna Book, W1AW**
- Phil Gural, W9NAW**



Write an Article  
**This means You!**  
Please??

**NOTE FROM A WINNER**

*By Paul Antos, WB2ABD*

First, I'd like to thank WARAC for the nice plaque, a pleasant surprise for this year's efforts. Success in any state QSO party really depends upon a variety of factors, and propagation is one of the most important ones. Looking at the few plaques I do have, I'm reminded that none of them would be on the wall had not 40 meters played a vital role. I'd say I can do well if that band is cooperative. I can't say that about 20, because I only had a very low rotatable dipole at 18 ft. (I now have a tower up, 11 years after I moved). As is true of any contest, propagation is usually boom or bust. The other antennas were inverted vees - 55 ft. for 40m and 60 ft. for 160m/80m - strung up in the trees. I've also found it advantageous to use receive antennas like beverages and K9AY loops: it's really amazing what you can hear.



Paul, WB2ABD, was the Outside Wisconsin winner in the 2007 WIQP.

Another factor is the level of activity, and WIQP certainly has that! All the mobiles that are out there, I think, do a fantastic job in handling the pileups and making the effort to put the counties out - in winter conditions no less! And, there are enough of them to keep you in the chair, searching for new mults.

And one other item I must mention is the role that my buddy N2CU plays. Tom is a fantastic op and has a superb location up in the hills here in WNY. He does a good job of egging me on, whether it be contesting or DXing on Top Band. I wouldn't have the opportunity to write this without his encouragements (and help when the computer-ations fail me!).

Hope to work you all in this year's running!

*Paul, WB2ABD*

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**Scuttlebutt...**

- A local area VHF contest, the FM Simplex Contest, is coming up on Sunday, February 10. It lasts for three hours - 1:00PM to 4:00PM. This contest is sponsored by the Milwaukee Radio Amateur Club (MRAC). Details are available at <http://www.w9rh.org/documents/fmcontestrules2008.pdf>
- John Westimayer, N9LGD, is now the proud owner of a Icom 756PRO and is getting on HF with his new General Class license. Nice to hear you on, John.
- Ron Crown, KA9JCP, has been on the air more as he recovers from surgery. Ron, it's too bad you have to go back to work soon.
- George Dunco, AA9SR, has a new tower and beam up and now has a much more potent signal on 20 meters.

.....

## 10 Reasons

(Continued from page 1)

Wisconsin are slightly different. Hams located in Wisconsin can contact stations anywhere for credit ("QSO points") while people outside of the state only work WI stations. Each of the 72 counties in Wisconsin counts as a score "multiplier" and for in-state participants other US states and Canadian provinces are multipliers as well. The exchange is your county if in Wisconsin and your state/province if outside. So the basic idea is to contact and accurately log as many stations as possible in as many different counties/states/provinces as possible.

So - here are some things to think about:

### 1. You don't need a big station to do well.

I often hear people talk about how there's no point in getting involved in something like WIQP or other contests because "everyone is running 3 KW amps into stacked beams" and the "little guy" has no chance. The reality is that in an event like WIQP the ham with a typical small station is in a very good position to do well. Most of the important contacts for Wisconsin operators are made within a few hundred miles and local activity tends to favor the 80 and 40-meter bands. I have several antennas at my station but in the years that I've scored well in WIQP most of these contacts were made on a basic 40m dipole hanging 20 to 25 feet off the ground and fed with a long run of RG8/X. Most hams can manage an antenna like this even if it's only up for the weekend of the contest. As for power, since the rules were changed several years ago to include a power multiplier, very few people seem to be running more than 100 watts.

### 2. You don't need HF privileges or fast CW skills.

It is certainly true that most of the contacts that are available to you during the contest are on the HF bands. That said, you may be surprised to see how many people you can find on VHF and UHF. I know of a few VHF enthusiasts who focus their attention on those bands and have been quite active in WIQP. This includes QSOs on FM as well as SSB. If you only have a 2m radio and a vertical antenna you might want to hang around the FM simplex frequencies and see who you can find (146.55 is usually good). Some years there is quite a lot of activity here. As for CW, there are lots of folks that operate WIQP every year and don't use this mode at all. However, if you really want to maximize your score you can't beat doing some CW since the rules state that each contact in this mode counts more. If you tune around you'll find people at all different code speeds on the bands calling CQ WIQP.

### 3. It's great practice for operating on Field Day.

There are an awful lot of hams that don't have a burning interest in HF operating but do like to get on maybe once a year for ARRL Field Day with their buddies. As with

many skills, when it comes to being comfortable and proficient in front of a radio there is no substitute for practice. If you want to be a little smoother at FD this year then consider putting in some time during WIQP. You can practice your contest style exchanges, get familiar with a new radio or logging software, or try out a new idea for a portable antenna. Several years ago I did a WIQP "expedition" to a semi-rare county with a friend of mine from our FD group. We camped out and set up a portable station and had a great time playing around in the snow. We were also able to try out a few new tricks that helped our score in June.

### 4. You can help your favorite club.

Did you know that WIQP has a club competition? Is your club looking for a little organized activity or a little more visibility within the state? Here's your chance. The more club members you can get to submit logs the better your chances for winning the club title in WIQP. This could also be a good reason to get together with other members. There are several entry categories for multi-operator efforts. If you have an HF setup and others in your club don't, invite them over and do a multi-op entry. This can really be a lot of fun. It can also be a good opportunity to expose new hams to HF operating and contesting (see also no. 3 above). The Ozaukee Radio Club came out on top in WIQP 2007. Who will be next to hold the title?

### 5. You can win certificates and awards.

Some folks like "wallpaper". If that's true in your case you should be aware that the WIQP organizers provide very attractive "certificates of achievement" for a large number of entries. The top scoring single operator also gets a beautiful engraved wooden plaque. Be the first in your neighborhood to have one! Of course, getting on for WIQP is also a good way to check off a few new states for your Worked All States (WAS) or grid squares for VUCC.

### 6. Rare Wisconsin counties are active.

Are you a "county hunter"? Lots of hams get hours of enjoyment from chasing and tracking QSOs with counties

## About Fred

Fred, N9FH, is last year's WIQP winner in the Single Operator Fixed class.

He got his novice ticket as a youngster around 1977 and held the call WB2WDW. Following a period of total "radioactivity" for his education and various other distractions, he came back to ham radio as KF9ZI in the 1990's and is now N9FH.

In 1998 he moved north of the city for more space and he has put together a very capable station, described on his web site, <http://www.qsl.net/n9fh/>

(Continued on page 6)

## 10 Reasons

(Continued from page 5)

throughout the US. It's kind of like taking the WAS award from ARRL to the extreme! The object here is to make 2 way radio contact with hams operating in every county in every state. State QSO parties like WIQP are great for this in that since counties are considered multipliers within the contest, rare counties are often put on the air. Also, don't forget that WARAC sponsors the "Worked all Wisconsin Counties Award". The WIQP might be the only time you're likely to hear some of them on the radio.

### 7. Say hello to old friends (and make some new ones)

One of my favorite things about the WIQP is the opportunity to say hello to old friends. A number of hams that no longer live in Wisconsin make it a point to get on the air during WIQP and check in for this very reason. There is a pretty consistent group of operators that show up every year and after you do it a while you'll start to recognize a lot of callsigns. You're also going to hear lots of people you know from the local clubs. Some ops tend to try to keep it moving as fast as possible while others will take some time to "ragchew" and catch up a bit. It is a "QSO party" after all which amounts to a great way to get as many Wisconsin hams and interested others on the air at the same time.

### 8. Support amateur radio in Wisconsin.

The WIQP is really the only organized amateur radio event in which all hams in the state are encouraged to get on the air and contact each other. The level of activity in the WIQP says a lot about the state if the hobby in Wisconsin. Our QSO party has a well-deserved reputation for being one of the best organized and attended. The level and quality of CW activity is also often mentioned by those outside the Badger State. Get on the air and add your support.

### 9. Learn more about contesting.

Are you the kind of person that likes to keep score? If you like healthy competition and amateur radio then contesting may be something you want to learn more about. State QSO parties like WIQP are a great way to get your feet wet in contesting. The operating period is short, the rules are simple, and the scoring structure favors low power stations with low antennas. While activity levels are such that you'll be able to consistently make contacts at a pretty good rate, they are not as high as in other domestic or DX contests when the entire band will be packed from top to bottom with people CQing. Operators also tend to be a bit more laid back in this situation.

See how many QSOs you can manage in an hour, or think about ways to maximize the number of multipliers you work. The WIQP is a great place to start thinking about the strategy and tactics needed to maximize your

score. Contesting in general is probably the best way to develop a whole group of skills including fast and accurate operating, knowledge of propagation, station design and optimization, etc. You can always do something to put up a better score. Importantly, "better" can mean better than the next guy you want to beat or, more often, just better than you did last year. Keeping score and having everyone play by the same set of rules allows you to measure your progress as an operator and quantify the effectiveness of your station.

### 10. Have fun!

The most important reason to get on for WIQP is that it loads of fun. There's something in it for everybody from the hard-core contester to the casual mobile op with a 2m FM rig taking the kids to their afternoon activities. If you've never tried making contacts in the WIQP I hope you will give it a shot this year. If you've done it in the past but have gotten out of the habit then I hope you get on as well – if only to give your club a few more points and to say hello to some old friends.

You can read about the WIQP on the WARAC web site (<http://www.warac.org>). All the information you need to participate as well as the results for prior year's events can be found there. I hope to put you in the log on March 9th! CU on the bands. ....

73 de N9FH

## A GLIMPSE OF WIQP PAST

Below is a clip from a 1962 report of the Badger Amateur Radio Society (BARS - W9YT) at UW in Madison. See <http://w9yt.engr.wisc.edu/sixties.html>.

*During the Wisconsin QSO Party, two of our members went on a "DX-pedition" to Menominee County, Wisconsin. They set up a small station in the sheriff's office at Neopit and raised an 80-meter dipole between two convenient pine trees. Menominee County was created only recently, having previously been a federal Indian Reservation. Thus we were regarded as a rather strange breed of animal as we set up the station with a reasonable portion of the local population looking on.*

*The sheriff was very considerate, and provided us with a nice little room all to ourselves. He didn't even complain when our transmitter wiped his police band receiver right off the spectrum. Unfortunately, that area of the state is a poor one radio-wise, so we could only make 12 contacts in the 6 hours we were there. The expedition wasn't a total loss, however, because now we can always tell our visitors how that arrow got stuck in the top of the Viking II. ....*



February 6 - Phil Gural, W9NAW  
February 11 - Tom Liebe, WJ9TCM  
March 7 - Ray Massie, WB9WNA



*Wedding  
Anniversaries*

<None to report >

**President's Shack**

*(Continued from page 1)*

for a score of 924 for a total of just over three hours operating time. I know I would have done better if I had been on a couple more bands, but it was good practice. Thanks, Lynn, for a great suggestion. WIQP is on March 9th - mark you calendars.

I have said at several past club meetings that I was going to put a surprise in one of these Hamtrix issues to see if you really read them. Somewhere in this issue is the name of a very nice prize that will be awarded to the winner of a drawing at the February meeting. Here is what you do.. Read this Hamtrix and find the name of the door prize. Then, call me at 414-425-5596, and leave your name, callsign, and what the door prize is. The phone has voicemail, so please leave the message if I don't answer it. I will bring the names of all those who called to the meeting for the drawing. You must be at the meeting to win the prize. So, enjoy reading this Hamtrix, and happy hunting!

The meeting this month is all about our contest, the Wisconsin QSO Party. You might start by reading the two excellent articles by two of the winners from last year's WIQP in this Hamtrix. At the meeting Lynn, K9KR, will discuss various aspects of the contest, and answer any questions that you may have. I will be asking you to share your plans for the contest. I would like to see more club members participating in this contest. We always have a club entry, and a few more participants will improve our score. And, as you make your contacts, be sure to mention that you are a member of WARAC, the sponsor of the WIQP. This is regarded as one of the best QSO parties, so you have a lot to be proud of. And, a big thanks to Lynn, the chairman of the WIQP committee.

See you at the meeting.

*Howard Smith, WA9AXQ*

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**Minutes**

*(Continued from page 2)*

with members during our swapfest, about a number of items relating to programs and attendance. He indicated that a number of comments related to job conflicts. The board then discussed how to do club meetings for second and third shift members, with no conclusions, since the board does not know how many there are.

Howard reported that Tom had attended the "Presidents meeting" at our swapfest in Howard's place. Tom advised the board of the major items discussed that he had written down, many of which the WARAC board had discussed in past board meetings. After a lengthy discussion on those suggestions, and others suggested by board members during this board meeting discussion, the board concluded they were still going to need additional discussion, including a possible survey. Continued to next month.

*Programs* - the February program will consist of an

informal discussion among the membership in attendance, about the WI QSO party on March 9. For March, Wes Anderson will be doing a presentation on 6 meters. The board asks that if anyone is willing to do a program please let an officer know. If anyone would like to have a program on a subject, please let an officer know.

*Club Books Audit* - Howard asked that the Audit Committee do our annual audit of the club books.

*Swapfest* - Phil apprised the Board of the "to date" results from our January 5, 2008 swapfest, as he normally does at the January board meeting. He mentioned that he believes our new layout was accepted very well. He is awaiting prices for our proposed January 3, 2009 event. There was some discussion regarding how to increase advance ticket sales.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:27 PM.

*Respectfully submitted,  
Lynn Tamblyn, K9KR*

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West Allis Radio Amateur Club, Inc.  
Tom Macon, K9BTQ  
3547 S. 95 St  
Milwaukee, WI 53228



## WEST ALLIS RADIO AMATEUR CLUB, INC.

PO Box 1072

Milwaukee, WI 53201

W9FK / Repeater 145.170 MHz (-600kHz offset)

<http://www.warac.org>

***See our Web Page or contact us  
for more information on***

- WARAC Memorial Scholarships
- Wisconsin QSO Party
- Midwinter Swapfest
- Worked all Wisconsin Counties Award
- Amateur Radio Classes

WARAC holds meetings on the second Tuesday of each month and board meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month. Meetings are held at 7:30 PM at:

**St Peter's Episcopal Church  
7929 W. Lincoln Avenue  
West Allis, WI**

Entry is off the alley at the rear of the church.  
A wheel chair ramp and chair-lift are available.